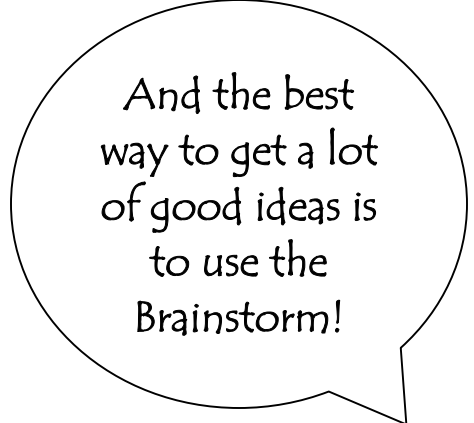


The best way to get a good idea is to get a LOT of ideas.

The Perfect Brainstorm



And the best way to get a lot of good ideas is to use the Brainstorm!

Advanced preparation:

- Cover every available surface with paper.
- Provide abundant markers
- Playdough, tinker toys, legos, tape, paper clips, paper, cardboard, stapler, foam cubes
- Post rules on newsprint (but do not reveal until after initial discussion)
- Arrange room in teams, groups—NOT in traditional classroom or auditorium styles.

1. Start with a simple question.

- *Why can't we keep our clients enrolled?*
- *How can we reduce stigma?*
- *What would help us bring in more of our specific audience?*

2. Refine the focus of the Question.

- *Try not to be frustrated if your question is not readily apparent.*
- *The evolution of the question is a good thing.*

3. Process, process, process!

4. Focus outward...

on a specific customer need or service enhancement rather than focusing on something *inward* such as an organizational goal. In other words, focus on what you could deliver to your customer (reduced time between request for services and delivery of services, shorter/more efficient enrollment process, etc.) rather than vague externals such as, *increased consumer enrollment*.

Linus
Pauling

Beth
Kelley

RULES FOR BRAINSTORMING

Play with the toys!

- Play is creative.
- The basis of all learning is tactile.
- And you can use the toys to build prototypes.

Go for quantity!

- Less is NOT more.
- MORE is more.

Go with your wildest ideas.

- **Some of the best ideas have originated with concepts that were made in jest.**
 - Wacky is good.
 - Off the wall is great.
 - Fun is imperative.

No Criticism. No debate.

- An “*anything goes*” atmosphere is necessary to foster creativity.
- Criticism and debate lead to self-censorship and keep us all thinking inside the box.

Build on the ideas of others!

- Originality and wild ideas don’t mean you can’t be inspired by—and add to ideas of others.
- Most great inventions are refinements or improvements on previous inventions.

Jump!

- There is much of value to be found in the space between one topic and another.
- Don’t confine yourself to one topic or idea.

Make Noise!

- Noise is the sound of ideas clanging together.
- And sometimes it is musical.

Show me!

- Not only is a picture worth a thousand words, building or sketching out your ideas can help see things you might want to change.
- Don’t worry about your skill with the materials—because no one is going to criticize!
- If you are dealing with abstract ideas, use examples to “show” what you mean.

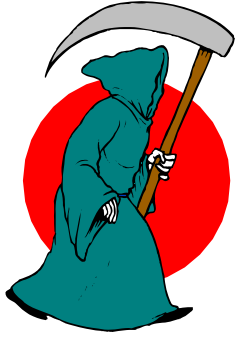
Use the Space.

- Write on the walls.
- Move the chairs.

Get Physical

- Get up.
- Move around.
- Keep the blood flowing and the ideas rolling.

Six Ways to Kill a Brainstorming Session

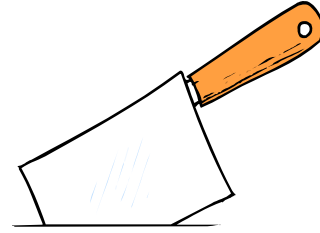


1. The boss gets to speak first.

Whether s/he means to or not, the boss will let the agenda and inevitably limit the brainstorm.

2. Everybody gets a turn.

Let it flow naturally.



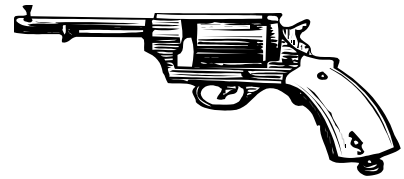
3. Experts only.

Customers make the best contributors—but anyone can bring useful perspectives, especially if they have experience or creativity.



4. Do it off-site.

Foster creativity in your offices, *all* the time, *everywhere!*

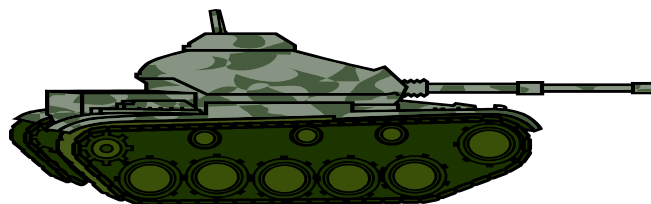


5. No silly stuff.

Silly stuff energizes and stimulates—and a lot of it turns out not to be so silly after all.

6. Write down everything.

Taking copious notes shifts your focus to the wrong side of your brain and keeps you from contributing. Sketch or doodle, but don't take detailed notes! Assign **one person** to take the notes.



December 5, 2001 Capacity Building Workshop

Initial Questions:

- Why don't staff participate in incentive programs?
- What forms of incentives can we use?
- What forms of incentives are we using?
- What incentives do employees value?
- What is the goal of the incentive program?
- How can we measure if incentives work?

Question Initially focused on:

"What incentives might be tried?"

Ideas:

- Tuitions reimbursement
- Matching funds for retirement account
- Preferred parking
- Email recognition from other staff and/or director
- Free membership at sam's club, cosco, gym, etc.
- Company car
- Own key to office
- Personal time to be with kids
- Faster computer
- Lactation room
- Pot luck for honored staff with the honoree choosing the menu
- Carpet
- Tv with cable
- Discounts
- Cell phone
- Private bathroom
- Long distance card
- Flex hours
- Additional support staff
- Comfortable chair
- Time to attend classes
- Extra hour for vacation and sick leave
- Own printer
- Recreation center on site
- Company credit card—texico
- Employee of the month
- Personal thank yous
- Training
- Lunch

"What incentives might be tried?"

Ideas (con't):

- Internet free
- Basketball
- Promotion, raise
- Massage
- Title
- Own lap top
- Relaxation room
- Coupons
- Gift certificate
- Discover and advertise perks available to nonprofit/govt employees
- lounge
- 1/2 day
- control over the thermostat
- tickets to plays, movies, theatre, etc.
- own shower in the office
- holiday time
- childcare on site
- option to turn over 2 customers/clients to another staff person
- affiliation with agencies with resources (like chamber of commerce)

- After compiling this list, group discussed how many of the ideas are not only do-able, but are already being done in many places.
- Further discussion brought us to the conclusion that we needed to involve our staff in coming up with incentives that are of value to them.
- Finally, the group decided to use their own experience (as employees) to brainstorm another list of management characteristics that have inspired them to do good work in the absence of good money.

Ideas for Management:

- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Have an end-of-year party.

- Avoid patronizing and exploitive demeanor with staff.
- Show an equality of respect and value for all positions.
- Be a Support and Role Model.
- Create a family atmosphere.
- Provide Suggestion Box.
- Show interest in person's life, not just the work.
 - (example given: staff allowed off to attend funeral of co-worker's mother.)
- Participate in group activities outside the office.
- Have a family picnic.
- Create a staff support group.
- Allow staff to evaluate the supervisor.
- Cut the bureaucratic red tape. (This goes back to saying what you mean...don't hide behind red tape to avoid responsibility for the unpopular decisions.)
- Be human.